

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT

Southern District of Georgia

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November 6, 2003

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Subject: New Bankruptcy Docket and Electronic Case Filing System

To: All Attorneys Practicing in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia

Pursuant to an initiative endorsed by the Judicial Conference of the United States Courts, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia is pleased to announce plans to implement the new bankruptcy court docket system known as Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF).

The Case Management (CM) portion will replace the existing NIBS case management system and will assist court staff in managing case information from opening to closing. ECF, or electronic case filing, is the judiciary's new electronic system which utilizes Internet technology. ECF allows attorneys, or other certified users, to file petitions and pleadings with the Court over the Internet. The system also allows certified users to electronically access case data and documents from their office or home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive automatic instantaneous electronic notice of case activity.

The CM/ECF system uses standard computer hardware, an Internet connection, and a browser. The system is easy to use – filers prepare a document using conventional word processing software and then save it as a PDF file. After logging onto the Court's web site with a court-issued password, the filer enters basic information relating to the case, party and document being filed. The filer then attaches the PDF document and submits it to the Court. A notice verifying receipt of the filing is generated automatically via email. Other parties in the case will automatically receive e-mail notification of the filing.

The implementation or "live" target date for the new system is anticipated to be September 1, 2004. Once the Court is ready to implement the electronic case filing portion of the system, bankruptcy court staff will hold free training sessions for interested attorneys and their staffs. Following completion of the training program, a unique password will be provided to each attorney for use in electronic filing of documents with the Court. The training schedule, along with other CM/ECF news and information, will be posted and periodically updated on the court's website at www.gas.uscourts.gov.

The Court's website currently offers a CM/ECF Computer Based Training Module. This training module will help you become more familiar with the CM/ECF program by walking you through various actions, such as opening a case, filing a motion, uploading a creditor matrix, filing an objection to a motion, etc. We encourage you and your staff to go through these various training modules to get an understanding of how the CM/ECF system will work.

For your information and planning purposes, please refer to the enclosed CM/ECF Skills Checklist and CM/ECF Hardware/Software Requirements Checklist. These checklists will help you assess what you need to do to prepare your office and staff for CM/ECF.

To assist the Court in determining the training needs of our external customers, we ask that you complete the enclosed CM/ECF Readiness Survey and return it to the Clerk's Office as soon as is practicable.

We look forward to continuing to provide the Bar and the public with accurate and timely case information. With your cooperation, and the technical support of our staff, we will work to make the transition to CM/ECF as smooth as possible.

We are very excited about the transition to e-filing and we are hopeful that before long all filers will be using this new technology. Equally encouraging is the support provided by the Bankruptcy Judges in their endorsement of this initiative.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Michael F. McHugh
Clerk of Court